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FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON

WILDERNESS AREAS
and
ECOLOGICAL RESERVES

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April 1, 1987 to March 31, 1988

ANNUAL REPORT

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON
WILDERNESS AREAS AND ECOLOGICAL RESERVES

APRIL 1/87 TO MARCH 31/88

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RECREATION AND PARKS

Office of the Minister

Room 107 Legislature Building, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5K 2B6 403/427-3672

April 19, 1988

The Honourable Dr. David Carter
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Sir:

I have the honour of transmitting the Fifth Annual Report of the Advisory Committee on Wilderness Areas and Ecological Reserves.

Respectfully submitted,

Norm A. Weiss
Minister
Alberta Recreation and Parks

Alberta
RECREATION AND PARKS
Parks Division

Standard Life Centre, 10405 Jasper Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5J 3N4

April 19, 1988

The Honourable Norm A. Weiss
Minister of Recreation and Parks
107 Legislature Building
Edmonton, Alberta
T5K 2B6

Sir:

I have the honour to present the Fifth Annual Report of the Advisory Committee on Wilderness Areas and Ecological Reserves.

Respectfully submitted,

Donn E. Cline
Chairman
Advisory Committee on Wilderness
Areas and Ecological Reserves

STATEMENT OF THE CHAIRMAN

Through the fifth year of operation, the Advisory Committee on Wilderness Areas and Ecological Reserves continued to receive written and verbal responses in relation to Candidate Ecological Reserve sites as well as the Ecological Reserves Program in general. The Committee reviewed and held open house sessions for Ross Lake and Upper Bob Creek Candidate Ecological Reserves. The input received from these sessions, as well as letters and briefs, forms the basis for the Advisory Committee's recommendations for the two areas.

The Committee met with non-government organizations in January, 1988. The meetings were a valuable opportunity to receive their views regarding Ecological Reserves and Wilderness Areas and is the basis for a number of the recommendations in this report.

The role of the Advisory Committee is an important one, and I would like to thank the members for their hard work throughout this past year. I believe the committee has experienced a great deal of success in fostering a better understanding and appreciation for the Ecological Reserves Program. Nineteen Eighty-Seven (1987) will undoubtedly be seen as the year the program became firmly established in Alberta. The establishment of Kennedy Coulee, Kootenay Plains, Silver Valley, Goose Mountain, Marshybank, Crow Lake, Whitemud Falls and Athabasca Dunes Ecological Reserves in 1987 and Wainwright Dunes and Hand Hills Ecological Reserves in January of 1988 puts Alberta well on its way towards developing a comprehensive system of Ecological Reserves.

I would also like to welcome Mr. Murray Turnbull, Acting Assistant Deputy Minister, Public Lands, to the Advisory Committee, replacing Mr. Mac Forbes who has left that Division. Mac Forbes' knowledge and experience will be missed.

D. E. Cline, Chairman
Advisory Committee on Wilderness
Areas and Ecological Reserves

ROLE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Advisory Committee on Wilderness Areas and Ecological Reserves has been appointed to represent the interests of the general public as they pertain to Wilderness Areas and Ecological Reserves and to advise the Minister of Recreation and Parks and the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife on matters relevant to those interests. The guiding principle in the operation and deliberation of the Advisory Committee is reconciling the best interests of the system of Wilderness Areas and Ecological Reserves with the many interests of the public as a whole.

The Advisory Committee was established pursuant to Section 2 of the Wilderness Areas, Ecological Reserves and Natural Areas Act, 1981. The role of the Advisory Committee as set out in Section 2(7) of the Act is as follows:

> 2(7) The Advisory Committee shall receive and consider requests from the public regarding wilderness areas and ecological reserves and may make recommendations to the Minister regarding:
>
> a) the establishment of new wilderness areas or ecological reserves;
>
> b) the addition of lands to wilderness areas or ecological reserves;
>
> c) withdrawal of lands from wilderness areas or ecological reserves, and
>
> d) the making of regulations for the administration, management, operation and utilization of wilderness areas, ecological reserves and controlled buffer zones.

The Committee's role is advisory and does not include the authority to make or approve decisions. The ultimate responsibility for decision-making on all matters relevant to Wilderness Areas and Ecological Reserves rests solely with the Minister of Recreation and Parks.

Advisory Committee Membership

Membership of the Advisory Committee is set out in the Wilderness Areas, Ecological Reserves and Natural Areas Act as follows:

2(1) The Lieutenant Governor in Council shall establish a committee called the "Advisory Committee on Wilderness Areas and Ecological Reserves" consisting of 12 members and shall designate one of the members as chairman.

(2) The Lieutenant Governor in Council may prescribe the term of office of any member of the Committee and the term of office of the chairman.

(3) The Minister shall designate a member of the Advisory Committee as the Secretary to the Committee.

(4) The Advisory Committee shall consist of:

(a) 2 employees of the Department of Recreation and Parks,
(b) 3 employees of the Department of Energy and Natural Resources, (presently Department of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife and Department of Energy),
(c) 1 employee of the Department of Culture, (presently Department of Culture and Multiculturalism) and
(d) 6 persons who are not employed by the Government or a government agency.

Members of the Advisory Committee as appointed by Order-in-Council are as follows:

a) Donn E. Cline, Chairman, Department of Recreation and Parks
b) Larry F. Duchesne, Secretary, Department of Recreation and Parks
c) Michael J. Day, Department of Energy
d) Murray Turnbull, Department of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife
e) Leslie J. Cooke, Department of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife
f) William J. Byrne, Department of Culture and Multiculturalism
g) Christian E. Andersen, Grande Prairie
h) Jack Clements, Edmonton
i) Horst Fauser, Lethbridge
j) Thomas Gilchrist, Milk River
k) Ken Kultgen, Foremost
l) Peter Orlecki, Two Hills

SUMMARY OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES

January 29, 1987 - Edmonton

The Advisory Committee met to review the current status of proposed ecological reserves and to discuss the 1987 workplan, including the open houses for Ross Lake and Upper Bob Creek Candidate Ecological Reserves. The Committee met with the Minister of Recreation and Parks, his Executive Assistant and the Deputy Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife to discuss the reserve program. Recommendations for Hand Hills and Wainwright Dunes Candidate Ecological Reserves were discussed.

April 23, 1987 - Conference Call

The Advisory Committee discussed the date, schedule and participation in open house sessions for Ross Lake and Upper Bob Creek Candidate Ecological Resrves. Additional groups to be invited to the sessions were identified and the status of reserve postings reviewed.

June 17 - Owendale (Jefferson Hall)

The Advisory Committee held a public open house to address Ross Lake Candidate Ecological Reserve. This site has been proposed to represent a portion of the Foothills biogeographical zone of the Grassland Natural Region.

The open house was attended by representatives of the Ross Lake Community Pasture, Alberta Wilderness Association, Archaeological Society of Alberta, Fenton Ranch, Del Bonita Wildlife Club, Magrath Rod and Gun Club and the public at large.

July 21, 1987 - Claresholm

July 22, 1987 - Lundbreck

The Advisory Committee held two public open houses to address Upper Bob Creek Candidate Ecological Reserve. This site has been proposed to represent a portion of the Montane biogeographical zone of the Rocky Mountain Natural Region.

The open houses were attended by representatives of the A7 Ranche, various Fish and Game Associations, Alberta Wilderness Association, I.D. #6, M.D. #9 and the public at large.

September 17, 1987 - Calgary

The Advisory Committee met to review and discuss input in terms of developing recommendations for Ross Lake and Upper Bob Creek candidate reserves. A recommendation for Upper Bob Creek and a preliminary recommendation for Ross Lake were formulated. The list of non-government organizations to be invited to a general meeting of the Advisory Committee was reviewed and updated.

January 20 and 21 - Calgary

The Advisory Committee reviewed briefs submitted by 11 organizations and met with nine of them. The meetings were an opportunity for organizations to provide their views to the Committee regarding Wilderness Areas and Ecological Reserves and for the Committee to advise them on the status of its activities.

Recommendations for Ross Lake and Upper Bob Creek Candidate Ecological Reserves were discussed and revised.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on biophysical reports, input from written and verbal submissions to the Committee, and the studied consideration of its members, the Advisory Committee is pleased to make the following recommendations:

(1) Upper Bob Creek:

As illustrated on Map 1 the Advisory Committee recommends an area of approximately 2,680 hectares (6,630 acres) be established as an Ecological Reserve. This recommendation includes Chimney Rock, an area north of and contiguous with the original Upper Bob Creek study area. Chimney Rock has been identified as a significant geological feature worthy of protection and inclusion within the reserve.

The Committee also recommends that individuals holding grazing rights within the candidate reserve be directly involved in management planning for the area and that grazing be maintained for management purposes within the reserve. The Committee further recommends that vehicular access within the reserve be restricted.

Active management of wildlife populations is considered essential within the area and the committee recommends that hunting be a condition of establishment of the reserve.

(2) Ross Lake:

The management implications with respect to the future use of this area were not understood by affected parties. Therefore, the Advisory Committee defers a recommendation on the area for one year until management implications for the area can be addressed. Map 2 illustrates the study area under consideration.

(3) Conservation System Planning:

The Committee recognizes the need for, and recommends an overall coordinated review and evaluation of, conservation programs in Alberta in order to:

1. clarify the roles of various programs;
2. increase coordination efforts between various programs; and
3. create a better public understanding of Alberta's conservation system.

(4) Public Education Program:

The Committee recommends the development of an extensive public education program for the purpose of increasing awareness of the public regarding conservation programs with specific emphasis on the Ecological Reserves Program.

(5) Additional Areas:

The Committee recommends that as part of the ongoing ecological reserve systems review and in keeping with the intent of the program, areas identified by the public and various organizations be evaluated and considered for designation as ecological reserves.

(6) Land Uses

The Committee recommends that land use restrictions including hunting, grazing and access be clarified for the general public with respect to how they relate to the objectives of the program.

(7) Management Planning:

The Committee recommends that interested local groups and individuals be involved in the management planning process for ecological reserves.

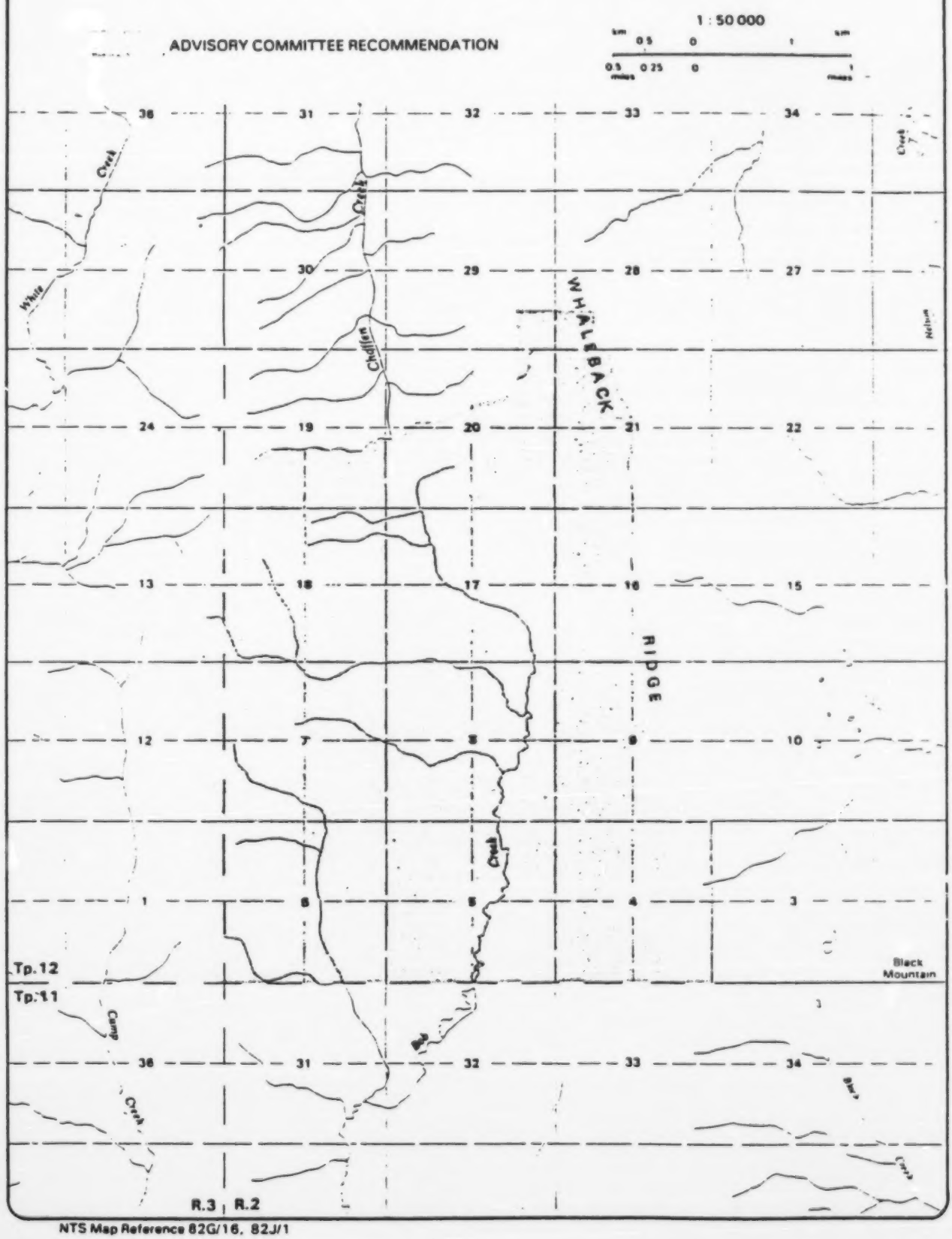
(8) Legislation:

Based on input from the public the Committee recognizes the need to review the Wilderness Areas, Ecological Reserves and Natural Areas Act (1981). The Committee recommends that a review of the Act be considered once management plans for a number of the established ecological reserves are in place and an evaluation of management priorities can be assessed related to the actual management of areas. (It should be noted that the Committee did not unanimously agree on delaying the review of the Legislation.)

UPPER BOB CREEK

Tp.12, R.2 and 3 West of 5th Meridian

MAP 1



NTS Map Reference 82G/16, 82J/1

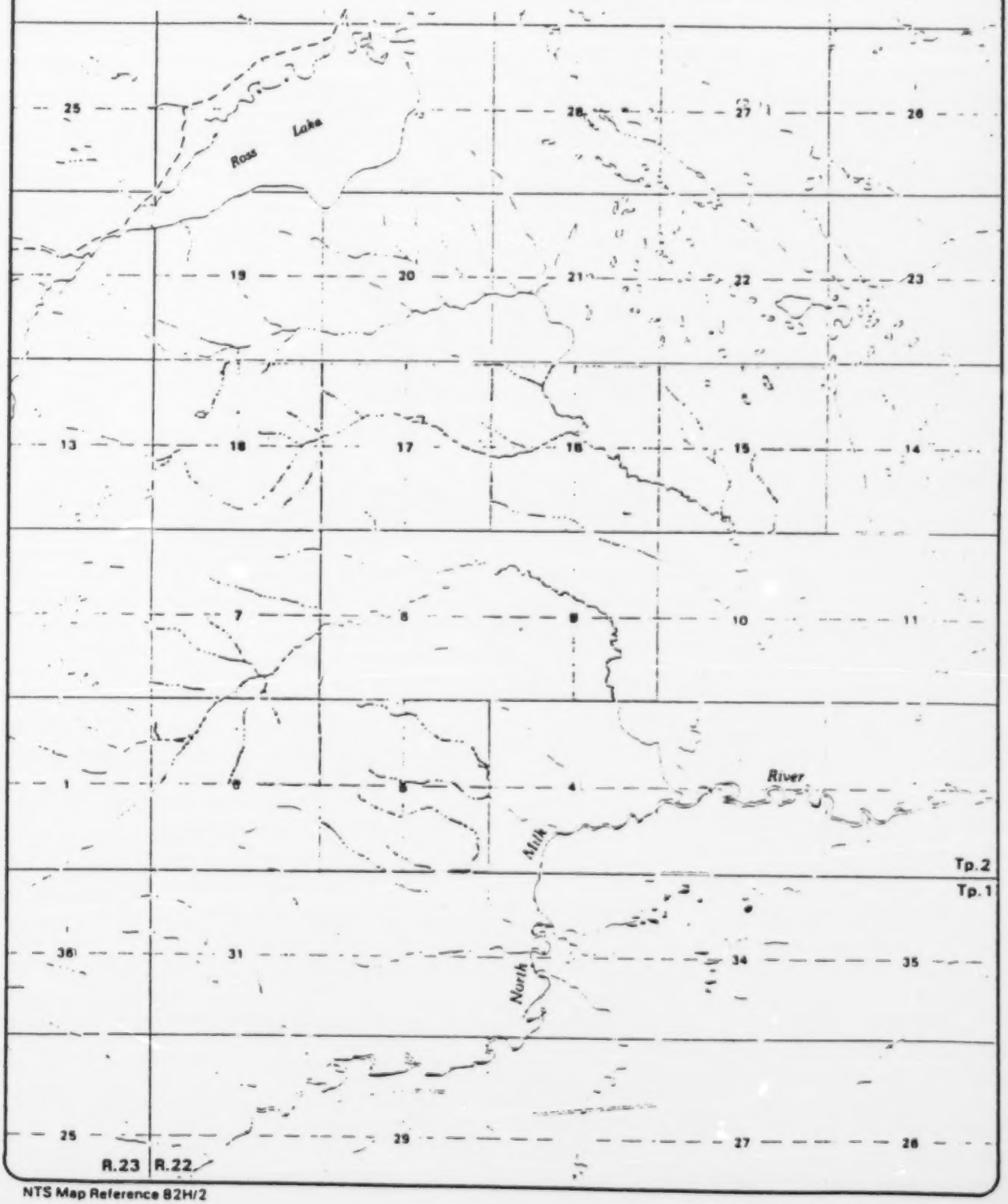
ROSS LAKE

MAP 2

Tp.2. R.22 West of 4th Meridian

CANDIDATE ECOLOGICAL RESERVE
AREA UNDER CONSIDERATION

1 : 50 000



NTS Map Reference 82H/2